

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFPs)**

**CONSULTANCY FOR GAP ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE LABORATORIES FOR ANALYTICAL CAPACITY OF FORTIFIED RICE (FR) AND FORTIFIED RICE KERNEL (FRK) IN NIGERIA**

**ISSUED BY: GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION (GAIN)**

**PROJECT: LARGE SCALE FOOD FORTIFICATION (LSFF)**

**MAY 2024**

**GAIN Nigeria**

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## I. SUMMARY OF DEADLINES

Proposal Submission Deadline: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024  
Award of Contract: 31<sup>th</sup> May 2024

All deadlines are described in detail under section IX.

As part of the selection process, GAIN reserves the right to request clarifications regarding bids that substantially qualify. Questions in the technical review are at GAIN's discretion and will only be directed to bidders who have submitted substantially responsive bids.

The final award is subject to other terms and conditions included in this solicitation, as well as the successful final negotiation of all applicable terms and conditions related to the awarded contract.

## II. ABOUT LSFF AND GAIN

The Large-Scale Food Fortification (LSFF) strategy is a cost-effective and proven method to combat micronutrient malnutrition by adding one or more essential nutrients to widely and regularly consumed foods during processing. Since 2002, GAIN has supported the roll-out of LSFF in approximately 40 low and middle-income countries. GAIN's support includes the rollout or expansion of LSFF programmes where there is a need and an appropriate food vehicle, technical assistance to improve compliance with existing national fortification standards and mandates, and monitoring and measurement of programmes. GAIN-supported LSFF programmes reach over a billion people annually. GAIN supports mandatory fortification of commonly consumed foods and condiments, including salt, edible oils, wheat flour, maize flour, and rice. GAIN supports the government to create effective fortification policies and provides technical assistance to support industry's ability to fortify. The consumption of fortified staples and condiments can play a major role in underpinning the prevention of micronutrient deficiencies across entire populations - particularly in women of reproductive age and adolescent girls - thus helping to address adequate nutrition during the critical periods of preconception and the 1,000-day window. GAIN and partners continue to drive new investments for fortification through global advocacy and generating evidence on the actual and potential contribution of fortification in the context of national nutrition strategies.

### About GAIN

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is a Swiss-based foundation launched at the United Nations in 2002 to tackle the human suffering caused by malnutrition. Working with governments, businesses, academia, and civil society, GAIN aims to transform food systems to make healthier diets from sustainable food systems accessible to all people and especially those who are most vulnerable to shocks.

## III. ASSIGNMENT BACKGROUND

Nigeria like many other countries, grapples with the daunting challenge of malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable populations such as children and women of reproductive age. One promising strategy to address

this issue is fortifying staple foods with essential vitamins and minerals. Nigeria has demonstrated commitment to this cause through significant legislative strides, including implementing iodized salt regulations in 1993 and fortifying mandates for wheat flour, maize flour, semolina flour, and sugar since 2002. In 2004, the Nigerian government launched a national mandatory food fortification program, signalling its dedication to combating nutritional deficiencies.

Despite these commendable efforts, effective monitoring of food fortification quality in Nigeria encounters substantial hurdles, primarily due to inadequate laboratory analytical capacities. These challenges include gaps in human resources, technical expertise, and infrastructural capabilities.

Fortifying staple foods, such as rice, with essential nutrients, is a pivotal strategy in combating malnutrition, particularly among populations vulnerable to micronutrient deficiencies. Given its widespread consumption across various socioeconomic groups, rice is an effective vehicle for delivering essential nutrients like iron, zinc, and folic acid to vulnerable populations.

Given the importance of fortified rice in addressing malnutrition, World Food Programme (WFP), and Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) aim to carry out a comprehensive baseline/gap assessment to evaluate the current state of analytical capacity within the relevant Nigerian government laboratories. This assessment will provide valuable insights into the capacity of relevant laboratories to perform micronutrient content analysis for fortified rice kernels and fortified rice.

By conducting a thorough baseline and capacity assessment, stakeholders can identify priority areas for capacity-building interventions and strategic investments toward accreditation of the required micronutrient parameters (iron, zinc, folic acid, and vitamin B12) and others (vitamin B1, B3, and B6) in Fortified Rice and Fortified Rice Kernels. This strategic approach will support the sustainable production, distribution, and consumption of fortified rice, thereby contributing to improved nutrition outcomes and public health in Nigeria.

## **Outputs and Outcomes**

A Baseline Report detailing Nigeria's current state of laboratory capacities to perform analysis on micronutrients in fortified rice and fortified rice kernels and a Gap Analysis Report with identification of critical gaps and areas for improvement to support effective fortification programs.

## **IV. OBJECTIVES**

The assignment will achieve the following objectives:

### **a. Overall**

The overall objective of this exercise is to identify barriers to rigorous analysis of micronutrients in fortified rice kernels and fortified rice to design a robust capacity-building package for effective testing of FRK and FR.

b. Specific objectives

- i. Evaluate the current capacities of government and private laboratories in Nigeria to analyse fortified rice and fortified rice kernels.
- ii. Identify critical gaps in laboratory equipment, technical skills, and methodologies.
- iii. Assess the compliance level with national and international standards for rice fortification.
- iv. Recommend strategies to enhance laboratory capabilities and ensure sustained compliance.
- v. Document lessons learnt and challenges encountered during initial laboratory analysis of fortified rice kernels.
- vi. Assess current analytical capacity by conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the existing analytical capacity within relevant government laboratories responsible for analysing fortified rice and rice kernels in Nigeria. This will cover a detailed understanding of validated testing methods and laboratory equipment. The objective is to identify strengths and weaknesses in laboratory infrastructure, equipment, human resources, and technical expertise.
- vii. Identify Gaps, Challenges, and barriers that could affect the practical analysis of fortified rice and rice kernels in government laboratories. This objective seeks to highlight areas requiring improvement, including but not limited to equipment availability, method validation, personnel training, and adherence to quality assurance standards.
- viii. Provide recommendations on capacity-building areas for successful testing of fortified rice kernels and fortified rice.
- ix. Support policy development: Provide evidence-based insights and recommendations to inform the development or refinement of policies, guidelines, and regulations related to rice fortification and analytical testing in Nigeria. This objective seeks to create an enabling environment for sustainable production, distribution, and consumption of fortified rice, thereby advancing nutrition and public health goals.

**V. SCOPE OF WORK**

- i. Data collection: information will be gathered through desk review, structured surveys, interviews with laboratory personnel, and physical inspections of facilities.
  - Desk Review: this will be done through a literature review on laboratory testing capacity in Nigeria, a comprehensive review of sample preparation methods, and validated analytical methods for fortified rice and fortified rice kernels and equipment. This review

- will provide a foundational understanding of the current landscape and help identify critical areas for further investigation.
- ii. Capacity Evaluation: Laboratories will be evaluated based on their technical equipment, availability of trained personnel, and adherence to standard operating procedures for fortification analysis.
    - Laboratories and stakeholder mapping: identify and map government and private laboratories and relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, food regulatory bodies, research institutions, and industry representatives.
  - iii. Gap Analysis: using the data collected, gaps in capacity will be systematically identified, focusing on areas such as equipment modernization, training needs, and method validation.
    - Assessment Tool Development: develop a structured assessment tool to collect quantitative and qualitative data from government laboratories analysing fortified rice and kernels. The tool will cover areas such as laboratory infrastructure, knowledge of sample preparation, extraction methods, human resources, analytical methods, and quality assurance practices.
    - Laboratory Capacity Assessment and Stakeholder Consultations: this will involve deploying the assessment tool to conduct on-site assessments of selected government laboratories and evaluate their analytical capabilities for fortified rice kernels and fortified rice. This will involve hands-on observation of laboratory operations, equipment calibration, method validation procedures, and sample analysis protocols. Also, laboratory staff training and capacity-building needs must be identified to enhance their proficiency in analytical techniques and quality assurance protocols.
    - Data Analysis and Reporting: Analyse the findings from the desk review, stakeholder consultations, and laboratory assessments to prepare a comprehensive report highlighting the current state of analytical capacity and recommended strategies for improvement and accreditation.

## VI. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

S/N	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINES
1.	A comprehensive baseline report detailing Nigeria’s current state of laboratory capacities to analyse micronutrients in fortified rice and fortified rice kernels	<b>25<sup>th</sup> June 2024</b>
2.	A Gap Analysis report that identifies critical areas for improvement to support effective fortification programs.	<b>1<sup>st</sup> week of July 2024</b>

3.	<p>Actionable recommendations for laboratory upgrades, staff training, and policy enhancement to support the fortification initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action plan for implementing recommended interventions to strengthen analytical capacity towards accreditation of micronutrient parameters and support effective rice fortification programme.</li> <li>Recommendations for enhancing laboratory infrastructure, proficiency testing, training programmes, and quality systems as well as any other recommendations as it arises.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> week of July 2024</b></p>
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**VII. COMPETENCIES**

- Proven experience in conducting Gap Assessment, preferably within the domain of food fortification, food safety, public health, or a related field.
- Familiarity with Nigerian’s food safety and fortification guidelines and international best practices
- Strong analytical, writing, and communication skills.

**VIII. EXPECTATIONS FROM APPLICANTS**

The successful applicant (s) will:

- Work closely with representatives from GAIN and its partners: A lead contact will be designated for regular communication and monitoring of deliverables.
- Meet with representatives from GAIN shortly after the contract is awarded, following which a work plan will be developed detailing the objectives, deliverables, timelines, and budget for each of the parts outlined in the Scope of Work.
- Meet with GAIN regularly during the Project as well as at the request of GAIN.
- Submit deliverables and reports according to the revised work plan's agreed-upon schedule.
- Technical application should not be longer than 15 pages, including cover page. All supporting documents should be included in the annexes.

**IX. TIMELINES**

The assignment must not exceed a maximum of 90 days from the day the contract is awarded. The comprehensive table of the assignments is expected to be as follows:

<b>Proposal Submission Deadline:</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> May 2024</b>
<b>Award of Contract:</b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup> May 2024</b>
<b>Phase 1: (Preparatory Phase)</b> Conduct preparatory activities, desk review, stakeholders' consultations, meetings, and development of assessment tools.	<b>1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024</b>
<b>Phase 2: (Implementation phase)</b> Visit government laboratories and conduct assessments, data collection, laboratory visits, and initial analysis.	<b>10<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> June 2024</b>
<b>Phase 3: (Analysis and Reporting)</b> Analysis, preparation and dissemination of reports	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> June – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024</b>

The proposal submissions must be received via email by GAIN on or before 11:59 pm on 15th, May date, 2024.

## X. UNACCEPTABLE PROPOSALS

The following proposals will automatically not be considered or accepted:

- Proposals that are received after the RFP deadline.
- Incomplete proposals.
- Proposals that are not signed.

## XI. REVISIONS

Proposals may be revised by electronic mail provided such revision(s) are received before the deadline.

### 1. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING

#### a. Contact details for submitting the technical and financial proposals:

Submission of the technical proposal and the financial proposal should be made in a single email with the specifications below:

<b>Submission type</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Soft Copy submitted by email	<a href="mailto:nquotation@gainhealth.org">nquotation@gainhealth.org</a> cc: <a href="mailto:digelle@gainhealth.org">digelle@gainhealth.org</a>	Consultancy for the Gap Assessment of Government and Private Laboratories for Analytical Capacity of Fortified Rice (FR) and Fortified Rice Kernel (FRK) in Nigeria

Completed Proposals will comprise of a technical proposal and a financial proposal. Both proposals should be submitted by email.



The proposal should include the contents below and not exceed 15 pages, excluding appendixes and CVs of consultant(s).

Cover page: Summary with basic information such as names, addresses, and contact information for the institution.

Capacity Statement: A brief capacity statement as to why the consultant(s) or institution (if a consultancy company is applying) is well-positioned to conduct this activity. This capacity statement should refer to the areas of expertise and qualifications of the candidate(s). The capacity statement should mention relevant work conducted.

Design and methodology: Outline the proposed activities (and outcomes), in line with the guidelines outlined above, and the specific methods to be used. This section should form the bulk of the proposal. GAIN is open to all suggestions. The technical proposal must clearly identify if and where the activity requirements may be difficult to fully satisfy and provide alternative suggestions that can achieve the above-listed requirements.

Work Plan: Proposed work plan broken down by weeks, which should include detailed activities and timeline. If more than one person is assigned to this consultancy, it should also include the time allocation of key personnel.

Budget: financial proposal broken down by phases and clearly separating the fees of the consultancy and other administrative costs related to each Objective.

In the appendix, the consultant should provide a track record of delivering similar assignments and provide references (contact information) of clients for whom similar work has been executed.

GAIN will not necessarily accept the lowest bidder, or any proposals submitted except when the requirements are fully met.

## **b. Proposal Completion**

- Proposals must be submitted on the official letterhead of the consultant and must be signed by the applicant.
- In case of errors in calculating overall costs, the unit costs will govern.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to understand the requirements and instructions specified by GAIN. If clarification is necessary, applicants are advised to contact GAIN through the email [ooyekenu@gainhealth.org](mailto:ooyekenu@gainhealth.org) and copy [digelle@gainhealth.org](mailto:digelle@gainhealth.org).
- While GAIN has used considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation in this RFP, the information contained in this RFP is supplied solely as a guideline. The information is not warranted to be accurate by GAIN; Nothing in this RFP is intended to relieve applicants from forming their own opinions and conclusions with respect to the matters addressed in this RFP.

- By responding to this RFP, the applicant confirms their understanding of the RFP conditions; failing to comply may result in the disqualification of their submission.

**c. Right of rejection**

- GAIN reserves the right to reject any or all submissions or to cancel or withdraw this RFP for any reason and at its sole discretion without incurring any cost or liability for costs or damages incurred by any applicant, including, without limitation, any expenses incurred in the preparation of the submission.
- The applicant acknowledges and agrees that GAIN will not indemnify the applicant for any costs, expenses, payments, or damages directly or indirectly linked to the preparation of the submission.

**d. References**

GAIN reserves the right, before awarding of the contract, to require the applicant to submit such evidence of qualifications as it may deem necessary, and will consider evidence concerning the financial, technical, and other qualifications and abilities of the applicant.

**e. Release of Information**

After awarding the contract and upon written request to GAIN, only the following information will be released:

- Name of the successful bidder; and
- The applicant's own individual ranking.

**2. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS SOLICITATION**

**a. Notice of Non-binding Solicitation**

GAIN reserves the right to reject any and all bids received in response to this solicitation and is in no way bound to accept any proposal. GAIN additionally reserves the right to negotiate the substance of the successful applicant's proposal, as well as the option of accepting partial components of a proposal if appropriate.

**b. Confidentiality**

All information provided as part of this solicitation is considered confidential. In the event that any information is inappropriately released, GAIN will seek appropriate remedies as allowed. Proposals, discussions, and all information received in response to this solicitation will be held strictly confidential.

**c. Right to Final Negotiations on the Proposal**

GAIN reserves the right to negotiate the final costs and the final scope of work of the proposal.

GAIN reserves the right to limit or include third parties at GAIN's sole and full discretion in such negotiations.

The payment will be structured based on the delivery of the milestones stated in section VI (line a).

When	Payment rate %	Deliverable
<b>Deliverable 1: Provide a comprehensive baseline report</b>	50%	Provide a comprehensive report detailing Nigeria's current state of laboratory capacities to perform analysis on micronutrients in fortified rice and fortified rice kernels
<b>Deliverable 2: Gap Analysis Report</b>	25%	Identification of critical gaps and areas for improvement to support effective fortification programs.
<b>Deliverable 3: Recommendations</b>	25%	<p>Actionable recommendations for laboratory upgrades, staff training, and policy enhancement to support the fortification initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plan for implementing recommended interventions to strengthen analytical capacity towards accreditation of micronutrient parameters and support effective rice fortification programme.</li> <li>• Recommendation for enhancing laboratory infrastructure, proficiency testing, training programmes, and quality systems as well as any other recommendations as it arises.</li> </ul>

To trigger the disbursement, the Deliverables shall be approved in writing (including by email) from GAIN.

**d. Evaluation Criteria** (*EW- Evaluation Weight*)

Proposals will be reviewed by a special Review Committee. The table below indicates a list of the significant criteria against which proposals will be assessed.

Item	Description	Evaluation Weight (%)
<b>1</b>	<b>Scope of Work</b>	<b>15%</b>
	Understanding of the objectives of the assignment	
	Realistic timeline of outputs	
	Detailed workplan, including frame and responsibilities	
<b>2</b>	<b>Methodological Approach</b>	<b>25%</b>
	Narrative description of the approach to the tasks, showing a clear understanding and methodology	
	Familiarity with country and context expressed through the design of methodology	
<b>3</b>	<b>Team &amp; Company Qualifications:</b>	<b>20%</b>
	Experience in similar assignments-Company & team	
<b>4</b>	<b>Organization and Management</b>	<b>15%</b>
	Organization of the field team	
<b>5</b>	<b>Financial proposal</b>	<b>15%</b>
	Price	
	Clear breakdown supporting methodology and team organization	
<b>6</b>	<b>Documents Provided &amp; Track Record</b>	<b>10%</b>
	Track record (GAIN experience working with the Company)	
	Docs provided as per bellow table	
<b>TOTAL</b>		
<b>Documents to be provided with proposal</b>		
1	Offer of Services	
2	Is proposal signed	
3	Is proposal submitted on official letter head	
4	Are fees quoted as a fixed sum inclusive of taxes	
5	Does the proposal map functions to team members	
6	Insurance	
7	list of references provided	

The above table will combine weighting with a “point” scoring system, as followed:

5 points	Fully meets
4 points	Meets, with minor gaps
3 points	Meets with moderate gags
2 points	Partially meets, significant gaps
1 point	Does not meet

#### e. Mandatory Requirements

In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined above, the applicant's proposal should also respond to the following mandatory requirements:

- **Fees:** The fees shall be quoted as a fixed sum inclusive of all applicable taxes and/or institutional overhead. The fees must be quoted in NGN (Nigerian Naira).
- **Experience:** Current curriculum vitae/resumes for key team members.
- **Capacity of the consultant to provide the required services:** Team members with relevant experience must be available for each identified position. The proposal should map function(s) to the team member(s).
- **References:** A list of references that can be contacted to discuss the team members' relevant related experience or for the firm.

GAIN reserves the right to contact the individuals and contractor(s) to verify the information provided in the Proposal.

#### **f. Expectations of Applicants**

The successful applicant (s) will:

- Work closely with representatives from GAIN and its partners: A lead contact will be designated for the purposes of regular communication and monitoring of deliverables.
- Meet with representatives from GAIN shortly after the contract is awarded, following which a work plan will be developed detailing the objectives, deliverables, timelines, and budget for each of the parts outlined in the Scope of Work.
- Be prepared to meet with GAIN representatives during the consultancy.
- Submit deliverables and reports according to the agreed-upon schedule in the revised work plan.

#### **g. Review Process**

The review process will involve a review panel with participants selected by GAIN.

#### **h. Limitations regarding third parties**

GAIN does not represent, warrant, or act as an agent for any third party as a result of this solicitation. This solicitation does not authorize any third party to bind or commit GAIN in any way without GAIN's express written consent.

#### **i. Final Acceptance**

The acceptance of a Proposal does not imply agreement of its terms and conditions. GAIN reserves the right to negotiate the final terms and conditions, including the costs and the scope of work, when negotiating the final contract to be agreed upon between GAIN and the applicant.

#### **j. Validity Period**

The Offer of Services will remain valid for a period of 30 days after the Proposal closing date. In the event of award, the successful applicant will be expected to enter a services contract subject to GAIN's terms and conditions.

Please note that should you not hear from GAIN within 1 month after the application deadline, please consider your application unsuccessful at this time.

#### **k. Intellectual Property**

Subject to the terms of the contract to be concluded between GAIN and the applicant, the ownership of the intellectual property related to the scope of work of the contract, including technical information, know-how, processes, copyrights, models, drawings, and specifications developed by the applicant shall vest exclusively and entirely with GAIN.

Subject to the terms of the contract to be concluded between GAIN and the applicant, the applicant is required to adhere to and comply with the following:

- GAIN's Design Application or Branding Guidelines.
- Although the service provider can put their logo in the document produced, GAIN's logo should be the one standing out as the owner of the intellectual property.

#### **l. Scope of Change**

Once the contract is signed, no increase in the liability of GAIN or in the fees to be paid by GAIN for the services resulting from any change, modification, or interpretation of the documentation will be authorized or paid to the applicant, unless such change, modification or interpretation has received the express prior written approval of GAIN.